



city of
greenville

News Release

GREENVILLE ZOO AWARDED NATURE PLAY GRANT

Zoo develops new nature club to engage local families

GREENVILLE, S.C. – The [Association of Zoos & Aquariums](#) (AZA) has announced that the Greenville Zoo is a recipient of the “Nature Play Begins at Your Zoo & Aquarium” grant. Supported through a special gift from the [Disney Worldwide Conservation Fund](#), these competitive grants, selected through a rigorous review by a panel of industry experts, are being presented to accredited zoos and aquariums to encourage family nature play and conservation education.

The Greenville Zoo applied for the grant to support a new family nature club, Get Outdoors (GO) Greenville, designed to engage local families with the outdoors, both within their neighborhood and through field trips. The zoo plans to pilot the club at two of the City’s six community centers to make participating in the club more convenient for families as well as showcase nature within families’ immediate neighborhoods.

“This grant provides a great opportunity for our zoo staff to connect with the Greenville community and inspire them to explore, appreciate and marvel at nature in neighborhood and community gardens,” said Dr. Heather Miller, Greenville Zoo Deputy Administrator for Animal Health. “GO Greenville families will be invited into the great outdoors where they can and should climb a tree, wade across a creek or turn over a rock to see the tiny ecosystem that thrives beneath it.”

The zoo also has partnered with local nature and conservation groups, such as Upstate Master Naturalists, Greenville County Bird Club and FROGZ (a chapter of FrogWatch USA), to lead quarterly outings and hands-on learning activities for GO Greenville families. The zoo's education staff will supplement these activities with additional outdoor activities and gatherings.

“Though the majority of GO Greenville events will take place off-campus, the zoo recognizes the importance of providing space for an unstructured natural area within its structured campus,” said Jennifer Kinch, Greenville Zoo Education Instructor. “Future zoo plans include creating a nature trail within zoo grounds to encourage families to interact with nature when visiting the zoo.”

The Nature Clubs Advisory Group, which served as the review committee for the Nature Play grants, is comprised of AZA members, AZA staff and Disney cast members, as well as partners from the [Children & Nature Network](#) and the [North American Association for Environmental Education](#).

GO Greenville club is free to join. Families can register beginning in mid-August by visiting the Greenville Zoo website at <http://www.greenvillezoo.com>.

About the Greenville Zoo

Accredited by the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA), the Greenville Zoo is rated one of the best tourist attractions in South Carolina, attracting over 270,000 people annually. Operated by the City of Greenville, the 14-acre facility features wildlife from around the world, including orangutans, giraffes, monkeys and giant tortoises. Visitors can also enjoy one of the zoo's most popular exhibits, the Reptile Building, which is home to a variety of lizards, frogs, turtles and snakes. For more information about the Greenville Zoo, visit www.greenvillezoo.com or follow the zoo on Facebook at facebook.com/greenvillezoo.

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